

MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (GOCI)
MARYLAND COMMISSION ON INDIAN AFFAIRS (MCIA)
MINUTES OF MARCH
MEETING:
Monday, March 7, 2011
Department of Natural Resources
Tawes State Office Building
580 Taylor Avenue, Conference Room C-1
Annapolis, Maryland
7:00 - 9:00 P.M.

Present: Chair Auriel A. Fenwick, Vice Chair Thomas W. Windsor II, Virginia Busby, Wanda Lee, Sherry Majors, Guy Wells

Absent: Kathryn E. Robbins Fitzhugh, Cornelius Allen Red Deer

Staff Present: E. Keith Colston, Agnes M. Smith

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: Chair Auriel A. Fenwick called the meeting to order.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MOTION TO ACCEPT FEBRUARY 7, 2011
MINUTES: Commissioner Sherry Majors

SECONDED: Commissioner Guy Wells

III. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: Administrator Keith Colston's report included highlights of meetings attended, funding opportunities, etc. Administrator Colston also spoke about the Accohannock Petition and redaction of the Piscataway Indian Nation Petition. Administrator Colston introduced the guest Mr. Bill Ariano, Deputy Director Community Development Administration, Department of Housing & Community Development who will address the community about some of the opportunities available and also to having someone hopefully from the DHCD serving on the Advisory Committee.

**IV. INVITED GUEST – REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Bill Ariano, Deputy Director Community Development Administration, Department of
Housing & Community Development**

Mr. Bill Ariano, Deputy Director Community Development Administration, which is the finance arm for the Department of Housing & Community Development. He noted that they don't go out and get a lot of press but they do about \$500,000,000 a year in financing throughout the State for affordable housing both for homeownership and rental housing. He noted that they are proud of the fact that even in these very difficult times this past year they financed the rehab for reconstruction of over forty-two developments throughout State providing about 4,000 units of affordable housing. Mr. Ariano noted that he is pleased to be here tonight to represent Secretary Skinner and he is taking under advisement and looking to see what can be done to have a person to work with the Commission on a regular basis. He noted that they are dedicated to assisting the citizens of this State in finding housing and shelter. Mr. Ariano noted that they do a lot to assist people to purchase their houses. He noted that last year was the worst year but they still purchased over \$100,000,000 in mortgages provided by their partner banks throughout the State. In addition to that especially with the economics going on they are extremely dedicated to

helping people that once they brought a home to be able to sustain that home ownership. Mr. Ariano noted that they have a number of programs although it doesn't help those that still have to go through the pain of foreclosure. He noted that they were instrumental together with the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation and under the Governor's pushing of some of the most progressive laws in the country to protect people who are in foreclosure. Mr. Ariano noted that Maryland has gone from the top ten two years ago in foreclosure to right now being thirty-seven. He informed the Commission about DHCD's website. Mr. Ariano noted again that the primary function is financing housing, but they have a number of different divisions in the department. He spoke about the DSELP Program (Down Payment Settlement Expense Loan Program) where they help people who are buying their first home to get additional cash they might need for the down payment and closing cost. He noted they also have a number of smaller programs such as Accessible Homes for Seniors which is a loan for rehab of homes so that seniors can age in place. He spoke of another small federal program that can help people with replacement houses which older citizens take advantage of. He noted that they see a lot of that on the Eastern Shore and in Western Maryland where a house is so deliberated that a person shouldn't be living there. Mr. Ariano informed the Commission about a small program where they provide financing for the acquisition and rehab of houses for families who have a family member who is physically challenged. He noted this program does about \$2.5 million a year for this type of financing. He noted that one of the reasons that they aren't as visible as the other agencies is that they work through partners. He noted that they work through local subdivisions, local community action agencies and local counties. Mr. Ariano noted that if a person has difficulty trying to access to one of the programs they also answer the phone. They make sure that anyone wanting to get benefits from one of the programs gets that opportunity. He noted that they have another division that provides credit enhancement. It helps to provide credit enhancement to developers looking for financing to do low and moderate income rental housing. They are one of six in the country that actually has that mechanism. Mr. Ariano spoke about another division in the department the Neighborhood Revitalization which runs a number of programs. They take care of the Community Development Block Grant Program in those areas they call non-entitlement areas. They also manage the Community Investment Tax Credit which is a financing program that can be used in some of smaller areas in the State. Mr. Ariano noted that they have a Minority Business Enterprise Link Deposit Program, Community Legacy and Neighborhood Business Works which provides grants or loans to businesses in the main streets of some of the smaller communities to help revitalize them. They are open to anyone setting up a business in these areas. He noted that there are twenty-four main streets throughout the State.

Mr. Rico Newman noted that public housing had for some year's programs to help first time homeowners. He wanted to know if the programs still exist. Mr. Ariano stated yes programs still exist but they are not State funded. Mr. Ariano noted that there is an FHA insured purchase house, monies for rehab program. This program provides monies after you purchase the house for a lot rate which right now is at 4.5% for thirty years with no points. In addition there are two other programs that will be coming out after this. One of which has to do with Energy Efficiently that if you put together some significant energy efficiently types of activities as part of this rehab loan they will take another 1/4% off interest rate. He noted if the base rate is 4.5% they will offer 4.25% on this energy component plus additional money above the appraised value. You have to install a more efficient than normal furnace that cost much more. He noted that people go right away to windows but windows don't do that much as far as energy efficiency. Mr. Ariano noted that the Commission is the first to know about this program which will start early this summer. Mr. Ariano spoke about a program for houses that have been foreclosed on or vacant because of that, they will offer them an additional discount on the interest rate. He noted the reason for this is to get the house back in the economy since it's no good to have a vacate house in the neighborhood which pulls down the value of the surrounding

houses and decreases tax dollars. Mr. Ariano noted that a lot of the programs are run by their partners so that they do not have to hire a lot of staff to administer these programs. That's why they work through different partners. He noted that there are certain areas excluded for new construction outside where growth is expected. He also noted that the programs are income and price limited. He noted that they are up to about 140% median (income). You have to be a first home buyer except in certain areas which are federally targeted areas which are all over the State.

The website is: www.mdhousing.org.

Mr. Ariano noted that they are working on the Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program Grant which is from HUD. It's \$40,000,000 with \$50,000 per household and will disappear after five years. He noted that in order to be a part of the MBE Link Deposit Program the borrower must be certified by MTA, etc.

Mr. Bob Gajdys asked about the Weatherization Program and if it still exist and at what level. Mr. Ariano noted that the Weatherization program exist at \$200,000,000 for ten years with 900 units done a year. Weatherization goes in and seals the house. There are 38-100 contractors. The contract has to be awarded to a non-profit and they have to find the contractors. They trained over 450 people. He noted by March 2012 all monies have to be spent. He spoke about the Lead Paint Program where money comes directly from the State. You can get a grant or non-advertising loan in this program.

Mr. Jack Purdue, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service

Mr. Jack Purdue, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service noted that the citizens of Maryland benefit from the State lands. He introduced his colleagues Mr. Bob Webster, Regional Coordinator for Western four counties; Mr. John Danning, Forest Manager for Potomac Garrett State Parks; Mr. Mark Beals, State Forest Manager for Blue Ridge State Forest; and Wade Dorsey, Forest Manager for Severn River State Forest. Mr. Purdue noted that the DNR manages about 400,000 acres across the State in which half is managed by the DNR Forestry. He noted that State Forest Management started in Maryland in 1906 when the Garrett brothers donated some land in Garrett County that they had inherited to the State with the continuance that would be managed under scientific principles. From there the State went on to develop a land program with the DNR. He noted that most of the 200,000 acres that they manage are in Alleghany and Garrett Counties and the lower Eastern Shore. Mr. Purdue noted that some of the goals are to restore and protect the trees, forest and ego systems for the benefit of the citizens of the State. They try to connect people to the land. He noted that the citizens of Maryland benefit from the State lands even though many of them ever visit a State forest or State park. He noted they try to enhance clean air. Mr. Purdue gave the three step review process: 1st Step – Forestry People (Inter-disciplinary Team); 2nd Step – Citizens Advisory Committee (group of about 11 private citizens with special knowledge or interest of what goes on in the State parks)(fisherman, hunters, environmentalist, etc); and 3rd Step – Public at-large (30 days open to public). He noted that there are five State Forest (200,000 acres) with Garrett being the wettest part of the State and Alleghany being the driest. He noted that in 1999 the State of Maryland and the conservation Fund jointly purchased the former Maryland holdings of the Chesapeake Forest products Corporation, a total of 58,000 acres. The Conservation Fund gifted half the land (29,000 acres) to DNR with conditions that they have a guided sustainable forest management plan and seek forest management certification. They are certified as sustainably managed by Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council since 2003. Mr. Purdue spoke about the Forest Stewardship Council principle 3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights. He noted that the Forest Stewardship Council is an international buyer based out of Germany. He

noted that certification is based on economics, ecology and social. He noted that one of the principals is because the certification movement really started out of people that were concerned about tropical hard woods and rain forest being diluted and not being able to grow back. He noted when the trees were cut for cattle, etc. the sun is too hot and the forest cannot grow back. He noted that the Forest Stewardship Council thought they were being taken advantage of so one whole principal was established towards Indigenous people. One of the things the principal states is that the forest owner or manager invites consultation with tribal representatives in identifying sites of current or traditional cultural, archeological, ecological, economic or religious significance and in consultation with tribal representatives, the forest owner or manager develops measures to protect or enhance areas of special significance. He noted that one of the things they have done is to have all their lands on the lower Eastern Shore under these guidelines. Mr. Purdue noted that the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) met with tribal representatives to ask them to be a part of the review representing areas of concern or issues or anything that they can identify that they need to be aware of. He noted that in April they are taking that certification to expand to the western part of the State.

Commissioners Majors asked about the Lower Shore Mt. Vernon area, specifically the Pocomoke Forest. She noted that on one occasion she was making that drive and there was one of the management signs and behind it look like a war zone. What she couldn't imagine is the Pocomoke Forest has been described by some as a Mid-Atlantic green forest. A swampy area where specific species will grow and they depend on that canopy. She noted that she understands that every so often there is a need to harvest but what steps are being taken to restore? Mr. Purdue noted that they try to identify all the special sites that are on the properties. He noted that 50% are taken off for water protection or special habitats, etc. If any of those areas have been identified they don't go there. Mr. Purdue noted that another thing that certification requires them to do is to make sure they are not over harvesting. They are not harvesting more than growth. He noted that they have to make sure those areas come back. Mr. Purdue noted that a lot of energy is put into a forest to make sure that it does come back in time.

Commissioner Virginia Busby asked what the target year is to bring back the natural ego system.

Mr. Purdue noted that the industry is changing a lot. He noted that they work with an interdisciplinary team and they depend on the Heritage Program to give them an idea of what the natural resources is that they should be managing. He noted that they place a lot of that back on their findings. There is no specific date. Mr. Purdue noted that in the Lower Eastern Shore land managers look at the land down there and they talk about the cultivation or ridge.

Mr. Gajdys asked will all the States forestry land have to adhere to these principals and when. Mr. Purdue noted that the Auditors are coming to Western Maryland in April and they hope to be abiding by the principals now. He noted that if there is a concern that they are not adhering to the principals then let them know and they will make adjustments. Are there any Indigenous people in the State of Maryland on the advisory committee? Mr. Purdue noted that on the lower Eastern Shore, Pocomoke and the Chesapeake Forest they do and that's his next point is to have someone on the Western Maryland Forest Advisory Committee.

Administrator Colston noted that Forestry Management will be meeting with Chief Crowe Neale. He noted that Chief Neale made a phone call to note that someone will be meeting with him. They are making contact.

Administrator Colston asked the community to inquire or support the National Museum of the American Indian casting of "Catching Shadows". He noted that a letter will go out to respect to

supporting the exhibit at the National Museum of the American Indian. The letter will go towards the individuals who were there at the last meeting and they will carry it to the committee meeting that they will be a part of at the National Museum.

**V. COMMITTEE REPORTS:
REPATRIATION**

Commissioner Busby noted that Ms. Gina Hamilton and Commissioner Guy Wells went to Jefferson Patterson Park and prepared remains for burial on Sunday, March 13, 2011.

SWEAT LODGE:

Commissioner Guy Wells noted that for the sweat lodges and the health of the circles in the Eastern and Western Correction, both areas are doing well. He noted that the Eastern Shore Lodge holds four sweats a year. Commissioner Wells noted that the Western Lodge is not up but all ground work is being done.

EDUCATION:

Commissioner Wanda Lee noted that Dr. Thoma has agreed to meet with the Education Committee at the library in Annapolis this month. She noted that this will be a baseline meeting. The meeting has to be set-up.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Colston informed the Commission that Ms. Wanita Mullen, Liaison American Indian National and Secretary Chau, Veterans Affairs Commission wants MCIA support for Native representative on their advisory committees.

Mr. Newman noted he was under the impression that Fred Nordhorn and Greg Hamilton had created the Veterans Commission. It was noted that they did in Montgomery County.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Joint Commissions Legislative Day

March 10, 2011

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Miller Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis MD

Ms. Carol Ebright asked if there was any legislation for Native Americans. It was noted that Delegate Branch is trying to get American Indian Heritage Day recognized in the school system.

Mr. Newman affirmed the ecology requirements for graduation.

Administrator Colston will investigate.

VIII. BENEDICTION/ADJOURNMENT

Benediction by Chief Rudy Laughing Otter Hall

Motion to adjourn Commissioner Lee, and seconded by Commissioner Busby.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.